

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 0506

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SCUL CH

SUBJECT: CHINESE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXHIBITION

REF: STATE 057846

1. THE DEPARTMENT'S PROMPT AND FORTHCOMING RESPONSE TO THE PRC'S PROPOSALS FOR THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXHIBITION WAS GREATLY APPRECIATED. BEFORE HOLDRIDGE REQUESTS A FURTHER APPOINTMENT WITH HSIAO TEH, HOWEVER, I WANT TO REGISTER MY CONCERN OVER THE DEPARTMENT'S INSTRUCTIONS ONCE AGAIN TO ASK THE CHINESE FOR A FURTHER EXTENSION OF THE EXHIBIT'S STAY IN THE U.S. TO PERMIT ANY

INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF CITIES VISITED.

2. DURING THE MARCH 19 MEETING WITH HSIAO TEH, HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE PRC HAD GIVEN SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO OUR REQUEST OF LAST YEAR AND THAT THE DECISION TO PERMIT THE EXHIBIT TO STAY IN THE U.S. FOR SIX MONTHS WAS MADE TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THEIR OWN OVERALL TIMETABLE FOR THE RELICS TO REMAIN ABROAD. I CONSIDER IT EXTREMELY UNLIKELY THAT THE CHINESE WILL COMPROMISE FURTHER ON THE QUESTION, AND I FEAR THAT A FURTHER REQUEST WILL SIMPLY DISSIPATE THE GOOD WILL CREATED BY

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THE PRC'S GESTURE.

3. MOREOVER, WHILE I FULLY APPRECIATE THE DEPARTMENT'S RATIONALE FOR WANTING TO ADD A THIRD CITY AND UNDERSTAND THE UNDOUBTED PRESSURES FROM VARIOUS MUSEUMS FOR A FURTHER EXTENSION, POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHINESE ARE ALSO INVOLVED. THE CHINESE HAVE DECIDED TO SINGLE OUT THE U.S. FOR SPECIAL TREATMENT IN AGREEING TO A TOUR OF TWICE THE LENGTH OF THAT GRANTED ANY OTHER COUNTRY. THE CANADIANS, FOR EXAMPLE, ALSO REQUESTED SHOWINGS ON BOTH COASTS AND WERE REFUSED. I EXPECT THAT THE CHINESE CONSIDER THEIR COMPROMISE OFFER TO US A SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL GESTURE, AND IT WOULD BE UNFORTUNAE IF WE WERE TO VITIATE IT BY FURTHER HAGGLING. I RECOMMEND THEREFORE, THAT THE DEPARTMENT RECONSIDER ITS PLAN TO REQUEST A NINE MONTH TOUR OF THE U.S. INVOLVING THREE CITIES.

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